



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

THE ARTISAN AND MASTERSINGER DRAMA IN
NÜRNBERG

Theodor Hampe has extracted and published the entries in the records of the city council of Nürnberg that bear upon the history of the theater and drama¹ and has given an historical sketch of the Nürnberg theater based upon this material. The records begin with the year 1449 but are very fragmentary for the first twenty-five years. From 1474 on they are preserved in an uninterrupted series. A survey of these entries shows first a period including the second half of the fifteenth century and the first decades of the sixteenth in which short Shrovetide plays of the Hans Folz type or even more primitive were given. Then after a decade in which interest in the school drama seems predominant, there begins, about the middle of the sixteenth century, a period of artisan and mastersinger drama which continues to the year 1613. During the last two decades of this period, i.e. from 1593 on, the artisan drama is outshone by the new offerings of those first professionals in Germany, the English Comedians, and the period from 1613 on belongs practically entirely to companies of professional players.

The interesting period of the artisan and mastersinger drama from about 1550 to 1613, in the early part of which falls Hans Sachs' theatrical activity, is not adequately treated by Hampe and the purpose of this article is to throw additional light upon details of the theatrical performances of this period.

PLACES USED FOR PERFORMANCES

Nürnberg went over early to the Reformation. As a result some of its numerous church buildings became available for secular purposes. Of these the small church of St. Martha and the Dominican monastery were used in season for dramatic performances. Later, after about 1577, the monastery ceased to be so used and in its place the inn Heilsbrunner Hof came into frequent use. The following other places, mentioned as being used or refused between 1550 and 1613, show how considerable was the dependance upon secularized church buildings: Carmelite monastery (refused in 1551, used in 1560, and probably several following years), Church of St. Clara (used in 1551, refused in 1569), City Hall (School

¹ *Die Entwicklung des Theaterwesens in Nürnberg*, 1900.

play in 1552), Augustinian monastery (refused in 1569, used by English Comedians in 1600), Monastery of St. Egidius (School play in 1605), "des Anthoni Pfannen hof" (1587), suburban inn Gostenhof (unauthorized playing in 1612).

It has been generally assumed² that the plays in the Dominican monastery were given in the refectory, and from the following entry of January 16, 1576, this would seem to be the case: ". . . die andern aber zulassen, doch darneben sagen, wo sie im reben-ter bei den predigern an den fenstern oder sonst ein schaden tun wurden, wie zu andern jaren geschehen, denselben auf iren costen wider zumachen." I should like, however, to advance some reasons for thinking that the church may have been used. In 1562 the mastersingers were given the use of the Dominican monastery for their Singschulen: "Die meistersinger sol man zu den dreien hohen festen kunftig allemal im predigercloster singen lassen, weil es in der spitalkirchen zu engist."³ Here the monastery church is evidently meant, since the refectory, a rectangular hall about seventy-seven by twenty-six feet, would doubtless be "enger" than the Spitalkirche. The Singschulen are held here until 1578 when St. Martha is assigned to the mastersingers, "weil inen ir vorigen ort im predigercloster genommen worden." This taking away of the monastery in 1578 seems to be related to the fact that it is not used for dramatic purposes after 1577 and suggests a certain probability that the mastersingers had their Singschulen and plays in the same place in the monastery, as would indeed be the most natural thing to expect, especially as the Singschulen were regularly omitted at Shrovetide during the theater season. This probability is materially strengthened by the entry of December 1568 which refers to the two places where plays were given as 'the two churches': ". . . es hinfuro bei den beden kirchen bei den predigern und Martha pleiben lassen"⁴

Of particular interest is the question in which 'theater' the plays were given which Hans Sachs himself directed. His directorial activity falls in the decade from 1551 to 1560, after which

² Hampe, p. 70; Herrmann, *Forschungen zur deutschen Theatergeschichte*, p. 20.

³ Cf. Mummenhoff in Stiefel's *Hans Sachs Forschungen*, p. 284.

⁴ References to entries in the minutes will be given by year or season only, when this is enough to enable them to be readily found in the chronological arrangement of Part II of Hampe's work.

appears as a sort of successor, a mastersinger company of which the leadership rested, according to the minutes, sometimes with Sachs' personal friend Veit Fesselmann, sometimes with Michel Vogel, and sometimes with the two jointly. But throughout practically the entire quarter century from 1551 to the poet's death in 1576 we find a second company of players, directed by Jörg Frölich but giving as a rule also plays of Hans Sachs. An examination of the entries following 1560 shows clearly a regular practice, a sort of tradition, of giving the use of St. Martha to Frölich and the monastery to Fesselmann and Vogel.⁵ If this practice prevailed during the time that Sachs was active as director it would put him in the monastery, with Frölich in St. Martha; and this was, I think, the case, at least for his last five years from 1556 to 1560. The one entry in the minutes that mentions a place in connection with Sachs' play-giving places him in the monastery. This was in the season of 1557. An entry of the same year places the other company in St. Martha and other entries place it here in 1559 and 1560, so that Hans Sachs must clearly have been in the monastery in all three of these years. It seems reasonable to assume the same location of the two companies in 1556 and 1558, where no places are mentioned. This period in which Hans Sachs is so closely connected with the monastery may well be considered the height of his dramatic interest. In addition to the unbroken sequence of five seasons of play-giving, his productivity as a playwright is greatest in these years.

In the first half of Hans Sachs' decade of theatrical activity there are two years, 1553 and 1555, apparently without public plays. There remains, therefore, only the seasons of 1551, 1552, and 1554, and for 1550 the entry of the year 1551 granting the use of St. Martha to some company, "weil sies fernt (voriges Jahr) auch gepraucht haben." In these first years of the artisan and mastersinger drama the minutes do not yet mention the name of Frölich, although their wording does not preclude the possibility of his leadership. There is also no mention of places except that of St. Martha in 1551 (and 1550). In 1551 there is definite permission given a certain Joseph Aininger and his company to use the church of St. Clara. The question whether Hans Sachs used St. Martha in this season, or some other place, presumably the

⁵ See entries for the seasons of 1565, 1566, 1567, 1570, 1572 and 1576.

Dominican monastery, depends upon whether the words of the entry of January 5: "Desgleichen sol denen, die bei sant Martha ain comedi halten wöllen, dasselbig . . . vergönnt werden, weil sies fernt auch gepraucht haben," refer to Sachs. Under January 15 is the entry "Daneben erkundigung tun, was Hans Sachs für ein spil hab, sollichs wider springen," and under January 19, "Hans Sachsen auf die beschehen erkundigung sein spil vom abt und ainem edelman, der in gefangen, weils daussen allerlai nachred geperen und mein herrn zu nachtail kumen möcht, weiter ze treiben mit guten worten ablainen." The general assumption has been that the entry of January 5, as well as the two later ones, refers to Hans Sachs,⁶ but this seems to me questionable. If we could assume that slightly later conditions already prevailed at this time, the very use of St. Clara by Aininger's company would of itself indicate two other companies, one in St. Martha and one in the monastery. Furthermore, although the censorship of the plays is not always mentioned in the minutes, yet in the many cases where it is mentioned, it invariably precedes the authorization of performances, and to refer the St. Martha entry of January 5 to Hans Sachs and his *Abt in Wildbad* involves an improbable reversal of this order of procedure. There is possibly a small corroborative point also in the plural *inen* of the St. Martha permit, for in all the entries concerning Hans Sachs he is always referred to in the singular, without any mention of associates such as are often mentioned in connection with Fesselmann, Frölich, Aininger and others. These various reasons establish a strong probability that Hans Sachs in 1551 was not in St. Martha but was presumably in the monastery. For the seasons of 1552 and 1554 there is no mention of any places and no basis for conjecture, other than a certain probability established by other seasons. This rather detailed examination, aiming to show that for most of Hans Sachs' decade of activity as director and perhaps for all of it he gave his plays in the Dominican monastery, casts grave doubts

⁶ I.e., to his performance of the *Abt im Wildbad*, although Herrmann (*Forschungen*, p. 14) makes the improbable assertion that Hans Sachs' Meistergesang of Dec. 3, 1550, in which the poet invites to a Singschule including Meisterlieder and a performance of his play *Jacob and Esau*, was written "als eine Einladung zu jener durch das oben mitgeteilte Protokollstück genehmigten Veranstaltung. des Jahres 1551 (i.e., the performance authorized in St. Martha by this entry of Jan. 5).

upon Max Herrmann's attempt to reconstruct the stage of St. Martha upon the basis of the stage directions in Hans Sachs' plays.⁷

Mention has been made of the fact that beginning with 1577 Heilsbrunner Hof came into regular use as a 'theater,' replacing the Dominican monastery. Statements of Hampe about this inn need correction. In 1577 plays are being given here, probably by Veit Fesselmann's company, at the time when Frölich in St. Martha gets into serious trouble for playing "etliche ganz schampare und unzüchtige nachspil." The council investigates and decides on Feb. 23, since his guilt is established: "... soll man ine deswegen 8 tag auf ein turn stroffen und das spilhalten heuer gar darnider legen. Aber die comedianten im Halsprunner hof noch morgen ire spil halten lassen." The next day, Feb. 24 was 'weisser Sonntag' and the permission to both companies had been given (on Jan. 9) with the provision "doch das sie damit auf den weissen sonntag ein end machen," so we find on Feb. 25 the entry "Den comedianten im Halsprunner hof soll man das spilhalten nun mehr ablainen." I see in these facts no basis for Hampe's statement (p. 70) "Augenscheinlich nur mit Widerwillen war den 'Komödianten im Heilsbrunner Hof,' ihre Spiele noch einmal zu halten, vergönnt worden." Under date of February 25 is the following entry about the inn:

Und dieweil der wirt im Halsprunnerhof bisher nicht allein die fechtschul und comedien zu sich gezogen und im hof allerlei gelegenheit darzu pauen lassen, sondern auch was schier für spil oder kurzweil her kommen, daselbst gehalten, auch hochzeiten, zechen und gastereien hinein gelegt worden, welches vor jaren dergestalt nicht herkommen, auch dem closter halsprun nie eingeräumt werden wöllen, soll man die sach bei herren doctor Gugel dem eltern beratschlagen, wie solches gegen dem wirt zu endem oder was derwegen furzunemen.

The complaint here seems to be directed not so much against the regularly authorized plays and Fechtschulen as against other forms of Spiel and Kurzweil. Hampe says however in comment: "Es wird beschlossen, eine Änderung dieses zustandes herbeizuführen, und bis zum Erscheinen der englischen Komödianten in Nürnberg hören wir in den Ratsprotokollen in der Tat nur noch zweimal von "Komödianten im Heilsbrunner Hof" zum Jahre 1585 und für die Spielsaison 1587. Für die Epoche der

⁷ *Forschungen zur deutschen Theatergeschichte*, p. 13 ff. I have discussed this reconstruction in this Journal, XVI, 208 ff.

Nürnberg *Theatergeschichte*, welche dies Kapitel zum Gegenstande hat (i.e. the 16th century), bleiben die Marthakirche und das Predigerkloster durchaus die bevorzugten oder richtiger die vom Rate der theatralischen Produktion vorgeschriebenen Lokale." These statements of Hampe and their implication that the council was opposed to the use of Heilsbrunner Hof for plays in the late sixteenth century and continued to grant the use of the Dominican monastery are quite at variance with the evidence of the minutes. As a matter of fact the monastery is not mentioned after 1576, while the inn is mentioned in connection with the mastersinger drama in 1577, 1579, 1585, 1587, and 1606 and is used by the English Comedians in 1596. Two of these entries indicate that the inn and St. Martha had become the usual places for plays. In 1585 the council grants the use of these two places but refuses to authorize a third company and a third place. In 1587, St. Martha being for some reason unavailable, permission is granted the company asking for the inn and refused the one seeking the use of the church, but a few days later permission is given to this second company in the words: ". . . weil sie jetzo des Anthoni Pfanner hof darzu bestanden, soll man dasselbig gleichwie der andern (gesellschaft) in dem Halsprunner hof zulassen." Evidently Heilsbrunner Hof and St. Martha are the regular places and indeed after 1576 no other places are mentioned in connection with the mastersinger drama, aside from this sporadic use of 'des Anthoni Pfannen hof'.

The use of St. Martha continued until the end of the mastersinger performances in 1613 and from 1578 to about 1614 it was used also for their Singeschulen, after which it was renovated and seems to have been used for religious services. So this small church, although used but little or not at all by Hans Sachs himself, was in use and doubtless very largely for Hans Sachs' plays during the whole of this period of the artisan and mastersinger drama.

ANNUAL SEASON

Throughout Germany the mastersinger and burgher plays were generally limited to certain times of the year such as Christmas, Shrovetide, Easter, and in some cities, the time of the annual fairs. The most important of these seasons seems to have been Shrovetide, and not only for the short Fastnacht plays but for serious dramas as well, the serious ones having at times the express purpose of counteracting the carnival excesses and the objectionable

Fastnacht plays. In a Nördlingen supplication⁸ of about 1559 we read: "Dieweill zu Nurnberg, Augspurg und ander steten preuchlich ist, das die burger und meistersinger comedi dichten und agiren, von der zeit an pis auf fasznacht, welches alles Got zu lob und ehr geschieht, dadurch gotteslesterung, spillen, fullerei, hurrerei, zoren, zanck und ander schant und laster mytt verhindert werden, deshalben hat ein erbar gesellschaft ein schön evangelisch comedi miteinander gelernet . . ."

Nürnberg held quite closely to a Shrovetide season. In the earlier years it seems to have been a short one of a day or a few days about Shrove Tuesday, but with the new period of artisan and mastersinger drama, from about 1550 on, it becomes longer. Throughout this period the regular season was from Candlemas (Feb. 2) to "weisser Sonntag." Hampe gives to 'weisser Sonntag' its usual present day meaning of first Sunday after Easter and would thus have the usual season extend from February 2 to a date that might come as late as the end of April. This, however, is wrong. Weisser Sonntag in Nürnberg was Invocabit Sunday, the first Sunday of Lent.⁹ This would give a season of from one to six weeks but when Invocavit Sunday came very early the limits were usually extended a little. Consequently in actual usage the season seems to have been from three to six weeks. Even players from elsewhere, who sought permission to give performances out of this season, were regularly refused up to the time of the English Comedians. Although these from their first appearance in 1593 on gave their performances at various times of the year, the local mastersingers continued to be limited to their Shrovetide season. Even in the year 1612, when Emperor Rudolf's death interfered with their playing at the usual time, a request for leave to give their plays in April was refused. With the end of the mastersinger drama the old Shrovetide theatrical season seems to come to an end.

⁸ *Archiv für Lit.-Gesch.* XIII, 41-42. The document is undated, but the time of the year was doubtless January or late December.

⁹ This meaning is given by Grimm as oberdeutsch. That it was the Nürnberg meaning is shown by the following passage from the old Nürnberg chronicle of Ulman Stomer (*Chroniken deutscher Städte*, I, 67); "Kirstein mein tochter ward geboren anno domini 1372 die 8 marcij, waz der weiss suntag, zu vesper zeit," the eighth of March 1372 being the first Sunday of Lent. Also a number of entries in the minutes cannot be reconciled with the meaning which Hampe assumes.

Within the season the usual practice was to play but two days a week, Sunday and Monday. In fact in 1551 both Joseph Aininger, in St. Clara and the company in St. Martha are permitted to give their plays "doch nur am feiertag nach der predig" and seem thus to have played but once a week. The first definite evidence of playing on other days than Sunday and Monday is in the following entry of 1595, the wording of which indicates, however, that these two days were still the rule: "Dieweilen die comoedianten bei St. Martha ire spil nit allein an son- und montagen, sondern auch noch lenger in die wochen hinein halten tuen, soll man sie nur noch bis künftigen son- und montag spilen . . . lassen."

In the period from 1550 to 1613 there were eleven seasons in which, as far as the council minutes show, there were no public performances by the artisans and mastersingers. In most of these years supplications were handed in but were refused, the reason most frequently given being the plague, that great disturbing factor in medieval life. An examination into the plague years in Nürnberg shows that it was doubtless the reason in most years where no cause is given, as in 1574 and 1575. It is doubtful, however, whether the absence of plays in the years 1553 and 1555 was due to this cause. Lersch does not mention the plague in Nürnberg in these years.¹⁰ An apparent relation between the absence of plays in 1555 and Hans Sachs' dramatic production of that year will be pointed out later.

Goetze has called attention to the fact¹¹ that in the years from 1555 to 1561, for which we have the protocol of the Nürnberg mastersingers in Hans Sachs' own handwriting, the dates of the Singschulen avoid the theatrical season, the only exception being the year 1561 with a Singschule on Candlemas day, although the plays of Frölich began a week before that day. I believe it has not been pointed out how strikingly this relation between Sing-

¹⁰ *Gesch. d. Volksseuchen*. He mentions plague in Regensburg in 1553. A statement of Lersch for the year 1600 receives confirmation from the council minutes. He says in a note on page 273: "Der zu Nürnberg 1600 erschienene 'Bericht' und das zu Leyden gedruckte Pest-Boeck deuten auf pestilenzialische Krankheiten in jener Zeit." The minutes mention the plague in connection with the dramatic season of 1600 and 1601. On the other hand an old Nürnberg chronicle states that in the year 1600 all the burghers and artisans were allowed at Shrovetide "alle tänz und spil auch allerley kurzweil." (*Anzeiger f. Kunde d. deutsch. Vorzeit* III Jahrgang, p. 166.)

¹¹ *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Lit.-Gesch.* 1894, p. 446.

schulen and theatrical seasons can be shown from the year 1576 on. From this year to 1613, Singschulen are held only twice within the usual limits of the theatrical season, in 1586 and 1612.¹² We learn from the minutes that in 1586 the public plays were forbidden because of the plague, and in 1612, as mentioned above, permission to play was cancelled because of the death of Emperor Rudolph II. After the year 1613, in which as we know the council permitted the mastersinger plays for the last time, they begin at once to hold Singschulen within the Shrovetide season, thus in 1614, 1615, 1616, on February 20, February 26, and February 28, respectively, the last two of these dates being "weisser Sonntag" and the first one three weeks before.

PLAYS AND PLAYERS

There were usually two companies of players each season throughout this period. Some exceptions, however, occur. For a number of years between 1560 and 1570, in addition to Frölich in St. Martha, and Fesselmann in the monastery, we find Ambrosius Osterreicher, "der teutsche schreiber," allowed to give plays in the Carmelite monastery. This is evidently looked upon as an exception and a special concession. When, in an early supplication, Ambrosius¹³ even gets ahead of Frölich and secures the use of St. Martha in 1569, and Frölich is seeking some other place for his plays, he is refused with a definite expression of purpose on the part of the council "es hinfuro bei den beden kirchen bei den predigern und Martha pleiben lassen." This purpose is repeated in a second refusal: ". . . kunftig dergleichen spil mer nit zu vergonnen, dann zu den predigern und zu s. Martha." A similar purpose to limit the plays to two places, at this time to St. Martha and Heilsbrunner Hof, seems to underlie two entries of 1585, refusing permission to a third party and advising Veiten Hubner and Jorgen Fenitzer to rejoin the company from which they had apparently branched off. At first the companies seem generally to have given but one play. Then come a few years, from 1558 on, in which

¹² Drescher, *Nürnberger Meistersinger-Protokolle*, Stuttgarter, Lit. Verein CCXIII.

¹³ For Ambrosius' career, see article by Hampe in Stiefel's *Hans Sachs Forschungen*. It is amusing to note the extremely early application of Frölich for St. Martha in the following year. He gets back into his usual place and Ambrosius does not appear again as a director of plays.

there are clear indications that two has become the usual number evidently fitting in with the two playing days, Sunday and Monday of each week. The first mention of a more extensive repertoire is the permission given Frölich in 1565 "seine 6 comedien bei s. Martha zu spiln." In 1590 six plays were submitted to the council, three of which were approved and three rejected.

The entries in the minutes unfortunately do not often give the names of the plays. In the whole period from 1549 to 1613 only nineteen plays are mentioned by name, in connection with the artisan and mastersinger drama, including those rejected as well as those approved.¹⁴ In addition come, as partially identified, "zwei spil aus dem alten Testament" (1560) and "diejenigen comedien, so von den handlungen in Frankreich und Niderland gedicht" (probably two plays), rejected in 1576.

The tabulation¹⁵ (on opposite page) of the time of composition of the plays of Hans Sachs bears upon several of the questions involved here.

This table shows that the height of Hans Sachs' dramatic productivity was the decade in which he was also active as a director of plays. Noteworthy, however, is the number of plays, forty-seven in all, written before the year 1550-51, in which comes the first mention in the minutes of the performances of a Hans Sachs play. The influence of the annual season is seen clearly in the distribution by months, one hundred and fifty-eight coming in the time from September 1 to 'weisser Sonntag,' compared with

¹⁴ These are as follows, preserving the names as found in the minutes and indicating those that surely are Hans Sachs plays with an asterisk, and those that may possibly be his with a dagger: 1549, die Josephisch historien (probably one play); 1551, sant Johannis des taufers enthauptung; 1551, *spil vom abt und ainem edelman (rejected); 1552, enthauptung Johannis (rejected); 1552, *kaiserin, die eepruchs halb unschuldig ins ellent verwisen worden; 1554, *römisch histori von aufgelegter schatzung; 1556, *zerstörung Jerusalem; 1558, *kindheit Christi; 1558, †kunigin zu Frankreich (rejected); 1558, *konig David; 1558, *konig Cyrus; 1567, schöpfung der welt (rejected); 1567, †der passion (rejected); 1569, *Theseus; 1570, schlacht von Pavia (rejected); 1570 Theuerdank (rejected); 1570, zerstörung Troia; 1579, belegerung der stat Wien (rejected); 1607, spiel vom jungsten gericht (rejected).

¹⁵ F are Fastnacht plays, C, T are comedies and tragedies. The years are from March 1 to the end of the following February, that is, from the end of one season to the end of the next, all the February plays being dated before 'weisser Sonntag.' In the years between 1540 and 1544 no plays were written.

	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Totals
1517-40 F					1		1	2	1	5	1	3	14
1527-40 C,T		1						1		2	7	2	13
1544-48 F									2	1			3
C,T	1	1	1					1	3	1	1		9
1549-50 F									1			1	2
C,T					1		1			1	2	1	6
1550-51 F								3	3	1	1	1	9
C,T	1	1									1		3
1551-52 F						1	3	3	2				9
C,T	1	1				2		2	4		1	1	12
1552-53 F						1				5	3		9
C,T			1		3				1	1	2	1	9
1553-54 F	1						4	5		2	2	1	15
C,T	1					1		2	2	1	2		9
1554-55 F		1	2		1	1	1	1					7
C,T		1										1	2
1555-56 F						1	1					2	4
C,T						2	1	1	3	2	2	1	12
1556-57 F	1											1	2
C,T		1	1	1	1		3	2	2	3	1		15
1557-58 F							2			1			3
C,T	1			2	2	2	2	2			1		12
1558-59 F									1		1		2
C,T	2	1	1				2				1		7
1559-60 F									2	1			3
C,T	1					2		1	1	1			6
1560-61 F								1	1				2
C,T				1			2	1					4
After Nov. 1560	1T ('62)								1C ('64)	1T ('61)	1C ('65)	1T ('64)	6
Totals F	2	1	2	0	2	4	12	15	13	16	8	9	84
C,T	9	7	4	4	7	9	11	13	17	13	23	8	125

fifty-one in the other half or slightly more than half of the year.¹⁶

In the half decade from 1551 to 1555 he wrote forty-nine Fastnacht plays and only thirty-five comedies and tragedies, while in the

¹⁶ A glance at the table will show that there is not much justification for Creizenach's statement (III, 438, Anm. 2): "Auch die Abfassungszeit dieser Spiele ist in den späteren Jahren nicht mehr bloss auf die Monate vor und während des Faschings beschränkt."

second half of this decade, the period in which we find him most regularly directing plays, he wrote only fourteen Fastnacht plays and fifty-two comedies and tragedies. These relative numbers must surely have some significance and, as will be pointed out, have a probable bearing upon certain conjectures of Goetze. A glance at the year 1554-55 in the table shows a rather striking break in playwriting; in the months of November, December, and January, usually the most productive months, Hans Sachs does not write a single play. This is probably connected in some way with the fact that the minutes do not indicate any plays in the season of 1555. The great reduction in the number of plays written after 1560, coming at the time that he ceases his activity as director, indicates a loss of interest in the drama, due doubtless to a combination of causes. Some trouble and vexation is suggested by an entry in the minutes of Jan. 18, 1560, which, after granting Frölich's request to play, continues: "Daneben aber Hans Sachsen warnen mit machung derselben spil etwas behutsam zu sein, und was ainiche ergernus verursachen möcht zu umbgehen." In January 1560 in the *Beschluss* to Volume II of his works he complained of age and lessened vigor, mentioned "Viel feindschaft, neyd und hass" that his writings had brought him and expressed the thought to give up poetry: "Dacht, for meins lebens zeyt / Getichts müssig zu gohn." And he lives up to this purpose for a while; the years 1560 and 1561 mark a very low ebb in all forms of his writing. In March 1560 came the keenly felt death of his wife. In 1561 he published the third and as he thought the last volume of his works. This he devoted entirely to his unpublished plays and he may well have felt it to be a monument marking the end of his dramatic career as well as his literary work in general. He closes the *Vorrede* with the words: "Guthertziger leser, nimb also an mit gutem geneigtem hertzen diss mein letztes buch, darmit ich mein 66 jar und alter mit Gottes gnaden nun zu rhu setzen wil!" Although the years from 1562 on show a remarkable revival of his literary activity, so that two more volumes of his works were published soon after his death, his interest in the drama did not revive. He wrote only four plays after March 1562 and three of these remained unpublished.

In the case of the Hans Sachs plays mentioned in the minutes a comparison of the dates of composition with the dates of performance shows clearly the practice of giving each season a selection

from the latest productions, i.e. from those written since the preceding season. It is reasonable to assume that this practice prevailed throughout the period in which Hans Sachs continued to write new plays. This, however, is not of much help in conjecturing what plays were given in those seasons in which the minutes mention no names. As the above table shows, Hans Sachs averaged almost fifteen plays a year during his most productive decade, and of these not more than four to six would probably be given each year, if both companies gave exclusively Hans Sachs plays, Goetze, in his conjectures,¹⁷ uses an additional means which I consider unjustifiable. He assumes that there is a distinction in meaning between 'comedi' and 'spil' as used in the minutes, and that when 'spil' is used it refers to Fastnacht plays. 'Spil' is used in the entries giving permission to Hans Sachs to play in 1557, 1559, 1560, and in permission to Frölich in 1561 to play "des Sachsen spil." For 1557 Goetze is forced, to be sure, to suggest two comedies since as the table shows, Hans Sachs wrote no Fastnacht plays for practically a year before the date of his supplication (although he wrote fifteen comedies and tragedies). For the other three of these years Goetze's conjectures are Fastnacht plays, although as mentioned above, Hans Sachs was writing a great many more comedies and tragedies than Fastnacht plays throughout all these later years. Goetze's conjectures are not of themselves important but the question whether the repertoires of these years contained so many Fastnacht plays, or even contained any at all, is worth considering. In the first place, does 'spil' necessarily mean a Fastnacht play? It has often this meaning when used by Hans Sachs in the titles of his plays in distinction to 'comedi' and 'tragedi,' but is used by Hans Sach himself elsewhere in the broad generic sense of a play of any kind, and it is in this sense that it seems to be used, and very naturally would be used in the minutes. Thus we read in 1570 of the "comedi von der zerstörung Troia," but in 1555 of the "spil von der zerstörung Jerusalem," in 1560 of "zwen spil aus dem alten testament," in 1559 "Frölichs, messerers, und seiner gesellschaft, zwai spil besichtigen und, wo sich nichts ungeschickts oder unzüchtigs darinnen befindet, soll man inen solche comedias . . . zu spilen vergonnen." Evidently 'spil' and 'comedi' are used interchangeably. The entire absence of any plays

¹⁷ Keller-Goetze, *Hans Sachs*, Vol. 26, p. 50 ff., and *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Litteratur*, 1894, p. 446 ff.

that could well have been Fastnacht plays in the seventeen that are named in the minutes after the one Fastnacht play, *der Abt im Wildbad*, of 1551, considered in connection with the great falling off in the number of Fastnacht plays written after 1554, leads me to believe that in the later years of Hans Sachs dramatic activity, Fastnacht plays were rarely if ever included in the repertoires. Somewhat later there seems, to be sure, to be a change from this serious spirit and we find mention of Possenspiele given along with the regular plays.

There is little to add to Hampe's scant data about Frölich, Fesselmann, and other players mentioned in the minutes. The usual assumption, found in Goetze and Hampe, that Frölich was not a mastersinger seems to me very questionable. He took part in the Singschulen frequently in the years from 1555 to 1560 and won the highest prize several times. In 1561 he did not take part, and the Singschule met on Candlemas of this year while Frölich was giving plays. The protocol of the Singschulen from 1562 to 1574, which would show whether Frölich took further part in the singschulen, has unfortunately not been preserved. In the years 1576 to 1578 he was still directing plays but is not mentioned in the mastersinger's protocol of these years. From this evident loss of interest it does not, however, seem reasonable to assume that he was not a member of the mastersingers' organization in those earlier years of active participation. I feel indeed quite confident that the entry of January 11, 1558, "Den ansuchenden mastersingern soll man . . . vergonnen . . . zuspilen," (in which the mastersingers are mentioned by name for the first time in the drama entries of the minutes and for the only time before 1566) refers to Frölich's company, which is the company that we find along with that of Hans Sachs in all the other years of the period from 1556 to 1560.

ATTITUDE OF THE COUNCIL

The council's attitude towards certain larger questions is shown by its action upon theater matters. It was a dignified and cautious body. Although the Reformation early gained an entrance to Nürnberg, the council strove not to offend either side. In many Protestant cities the Shrovetide period became the occasion for elaborate plays and pageants satirizing the pope and papacy. Something of this kind was undertaken in Nürnberg in the early

days of the Reformation but met with the disapproval of the council as the following entry of 1522 shows: "Das vasnachtspil, darinnen ein babst in aim chormantel get und im ein dreifach creütz wirdet vorgetragen, ganz abstellen und dem sacristen im spital ein strefliche red sagen, das er zu soldem spil den chormantel hat dargelihen, und das er den widerumb zu seinen handen nem. Den hauptleuten des schemparts undersagen, das sie zu der hell nichtzit geprauchten, so der gaistlichait ze neid sein mög." A similar attitude evidently underlies the disapproval of Hans Sachs' *Abt im Wildbad* in 1551. On the other hand the council was opposed to the old type of religious play that kept up medieval catholic traditions. Nürnberg seems not to have had the great passion plays of the late middle ages, so characteristic of Frankfurt, Alsfeld, and other cities, but it had Easter and Good Friday plays. The annual Easter play was abolished by council act as early as 1498, two decades before the Reformation, doubtless because it was losing its religious character. The Good Friday play was abolished in 1523, evidently a result of the Reformation. Although Bible plays, of which Hans Sachs wrote so many, were doubtless a large element in the repertoires of the players, there was objection to certain Bible themes, such as the Creation, the Passion, the Last Judgment, moments that were so prominent in the medieval religious drama. In 1567 is the entry: "Jorgen Frolich, auch Veiten Fesselman und Michel Vogel sol man zulassen, . . . auserhalb der schöpfung der welt und des passion ire verzeichnet comedias zu agiren," and in 1607: "Thomas Grillenmaier und sinen mitconsorten, soll man ihr begern, das sie . . . ein spiel vom jungsten gericht agirn mögen, ablainen, ihnen sagen, es sei difs ein articul des glaubens und gehaimbnus, das niemand erforschen könne . . ." Similarly in 1581 permission to give a Last Judgment play is refused.

As Hampe and others have pointed out, the caution of the council is shown in its disapproval of modern historical plays that could possibly have any political suggestions. Almost all of the plays mentioned by name as not approved were evidently rejected either from political or politico-religious considerations. The entry of January 11, 1558: ". . . inen aber die ander comedi von der kunigin zu Frankreich um ergernus willen zu spilen ablainen," suggests from the title of the play a political reason for the refusal. This inclines me to differ with Goetze and agree with Creizenach in thinking that this was not Hans Sachs' harmless play of 1549,

'Die Königin aus Frankreich mit dem falschen Marschalk.' An additional reason for thinking it is not Sachs' play is the practice mentioned above of selecting for presentation only plays which had been written within the preceding year. From the political point of view the following approving entry of 1554 is interesting: "Hans Sachsen sol vergönnt werden, die vorhabend römisch histori von aufgelegter schatzung, weil vil guter argument und ursachen wider die beschwerden dergleichen auflagen darin auf die pan gepracht werden, die allen oberkaiten zu guten ge-deütet werden mügen, alhie zu agiren, wie er gebetten hat." The play referred to is Mucius Scaevola.

The attitude of the council toward the artisan and mastersinger drama itself changes in the course of the period, due doubtless to a moral deterioration in the plays and players. Some of the indications of deterioration found in the minutes are: the difficulty that Frölich gets into in 1577 'dieweil die spilleut bei s. Martha etliche ganz schampare und unzuchtige nachspil dise tag gespilt haben'; the increasing frequency of the warning or provision that 'nichts schampars oder sonsten vergrifflichs' should be in the plays; the rejection in 1590 of three plays 'darin etliche leichtfertige und schampare possen seien'; warning against damage to property in the monastery in 1576 and in St. Martha in 1591; a disrespectful and threatening tone on the part of the council, as in the permission of 1608 to play until the first Sunday of Lent, 'ihnen aber sagen, warnn sie sich lenger zu spielen unterstehen solten, werd man sie ins loch einziehen und daselbs mit ihnen auch comedien halten.' It is difficult to say when this deterioration began. I question Hampe's assumption that it was as early as the years in which Ambrosius Osterreicher played, i.e. from 1560 on. The evidence from the minutes begins with 1576.

EVIDENCE OF PLAYS NOT IN THE MINUTES

The discussion of this article has been based chiefly upon the council minutes. In conclusion the question may be asked whether the minutes give a complete record of the plays of this period. The requirement that public performances be authorized by the council was evidently enforced, for occasional entries show that unauthorized players were called strictly to account. There remains, however, the possibility that council action was not always

entered in the minutes,¹⁸ that it was at times merely endorsed on the written 'supplication' of the players, or that authority to give permission was at times delegated to one of the several burgomasters and the permit not made a matter of record. The entry of January 25, 1552 shows such action by the elder bürgomaster, which however was ratified the next day by the council.

The question of the completeness of the minutes raises the question whether there were private dramatic performances in Nürnberg that did not require authorization by the council. One thinks most naturally of plays given privately in the schools and in the Singschulen¹⁹ of the mastersingers, and it seems certain that there were private plays in both of these places and possibly elsewhere. It is naturally difficult to learn much about such performances.

In the following two lists is presented all the evidence which I have been able to find of plays given without recorded authorization both before and during the period under discussion. In the first list are instances of plays or playing alluded to in the minutes but without entry of authorization. One may suspect in most of these cases incompleteness of the record.

1. Entry of 1497: "Es ist bei einem erbern rat erteilt, Wolf Keczel und den Osswalt . . . ein monat uf ein verspernten turn zu straffen . . . darumb das sie Hansen Zamasser mit einem fassnachtspil als ein narren gehont haben." No authorization or previous mention of this play in the minutes.

2. Entry of 1517: "Den jenen, so morgen ain vassnachtspil vor dem rathaus halten werden, soll man vergönnen, etlich schranken von der pan ze füren und ain prucken darauf ze machen. paumeister." This instruction to the 'paumeister' implies previous authorization that is not in the minutes.

3. Entry of 1522: "Das vasnachtspil, darinnen ein babst in ain chormantel get . . . ganz abstellen. . . ." No authorization.

4. Entry of 1542: "Den schulmeistern zulassen, mit irn jungen dise zeit comedias zu spilen, unangesehen jüngster abstellung, diweilen zu der jungen übung dienet, doch sollen si kein trummel oder pfeifen prauchen." The 'jüngste abstellung' is not in the minutes.

5. Entry of 1549: "Dweil ein zeither allerei sprüchspil von schulmaistern und andern leuten gehalten worden, sols nun dabei pleiben und dieselben füran mer ze halten abgestellt werden." This implies plays not otherwise mentioned in the minutes.

¹⁸ Trautmann speaks of this with regard to Nördlingen in *Archiv f. Lit. Gesch.* XIII, 36.

¹⁹ Up to 1546 the meetings of the Singschulen required council authorization. After that, although they continued to be held, no acts of authorization are found in the council minutes.

6. Entry of 1551: ". . . weil sies fernt auch gepraucht haben." This indicated play of 1550 in St. Martha is not in the minutes.

7. There seems to be a missing record of approval of Hans Sachs' plays between the entry of Jan. 25 and Feb. 8, 1552. In the latter a new tragedy is approved, "wie man im die andern spil zugelassen." (See also Feb. 5, ". . . man hab vorhin spil gnug zugelassen.")

8. Entry of 1566: "Ambrosi Osterreicher sol man noch uf kunftigen suntag vergonnen, seine tragedias zu agiren, darnach abstellen." No authorization of Ambrosius' company for this season.

9. Entry of 1579: "Sixten Ludel . . . soll man sein begern umb widerzulassung des comedispilens ablainen und bei jungster abstellung nachmal pleiben lassen." This 'jungste abstellung' is not in the record.

The following more interesting list gives the evidence of play-giving not mentioned in the minutes at all. It seems most reasonable in these cases to assume private performances, although the possibility that some were public is not to be denied. The list given above indicates that the record of the minutes is not infallibly complete.

1. A request of "die choraes des neuen spitals" for permission to give a play has been preserved, of which there is no record in the minutes. If the reference in it to Anthon Tucher as 'pfleger' did not seem to put it between 1500 and 1505, it might refer to the entry of 1498: "Den spitelschulern ist vergunt ein spil zu treiben, doch das si dhein gelt da von nemen." (Hampe, p. 47; Lier, *Studien z. Gesch. d. Nürn. Fastn.-Sp.*, p. 10; also given by Baader in *Anzeiger f. Kunde d. deutschen Vorzeit*, XV, 231, where the date 1520 is given to it).

2. Evidence from a printed title-page: Ein Christlich Teütsch Spil, wie ein Sünder zur Busz bekärt wirdt, Von der sünd Gsetz vnd Evangelion, zugericht und gehalten zu Nürnberg Durch Lienhardū Culman, M.D.XXXIX. Culman seems to have given all of his schools plays privately; at least there is nowhere any mention of them in the minutes, although it contain entries authorizing other school performances. A later edition of this same play has the statement: "Geben zu Nürnberg auff der Schul des Newen Spitals. 4. Martij, im 1539." (Goedeke, Vol. II, p. 381.)

3. Another title-page: Ein schön weltlich spil, von der schönen Pandora ausz Hesiodo dem Kriechischen Poeten gezogen, durch Leonhardum Culman . . . (Geben Nürnberg Mitwochen nach Letare 1544). . . . Wednesday after Laetare Sunday was March 26 in the year 1544.

4. Another title-page: Ein schön Teutsch Geistlich Spiel, Von der Widt-fraw, die Gott wunderlich durch den Propheten Elisa mit Oel von jrem Schuldherm erlediget. . . . Durch Leonhardum Culman. . . (Geben zu Nürnberg 14. Febr. 1544). . . . A later edition has: Geben zu Nürnberg, auff der Schull des newen Spytalls, am 14. tag Februarij, im 1544. Jar.

5. Another title-page: Ein schön Christlich Spiel, Hecastus genant . . . , Durch etliche Knaben zu Nürnberg gehalten deutsch im 1549. Lateinisch im

1550. School plays of Rappolt are authorized in 1547 and 1552, but not these performances of Hecastus.

6. Creizenach says (III, 440): "Von den Repertoirstücken (der Meistersinger) hat sich ausser den Hans Sachs'schen nur wenig erhalten. 1551 ist ein Spiel vom edlen Ritter Ponto, verfasst von dem Nürnberger Rechenmeister Heinrich Hoffot zur Fastnacht aufgeführt worden und dann im Druck erschienen." Creizenach is doubtless in error in connecting Hoffot and his play with the mastersinger drama. The title of the play, which begins 'Ein Teutsch spil von dem edlen Ritter Ponto . . .' indicates a German school play, as opposed to a Latin one; the play comes within the period of interest in school performances in Nürnberg; the absence of authorization in the council minutes suggests a private school performance similar to those of the plays just listed of Culman and Rappolt. 'Rechenmeister' means therefore 'Meister einer Rechenschule' and not its other possible meaning 'Vorsteher eines Rechenamtes.' In 1618 permission is given Hansen Bairn and Endres Volckamer, "beeden teutschen rechenmaistern," to give three comedies with their pupils.

7. Hans Sachs' Meistergesang of Dec. 3, 1550, 'Das new jar' was a kind of an invitation to a Singschule of which the program contained among other things a play, 'Auch wellen wir wie andre jar / Da ein comedj halten.' The phrase 'wie andre jar' implies also an established custom. From the poem we see that the play was Sachs' comedy 'Jacob mit seinem bruder Esaw' of Jan. 30, 1550, and hence given, as was the usual custom, in the year following the date of its composition. See Michels in *Seufferts Vierteljahrschr.* III, 33.

8. Hans Sachs' Meistergesang of March 6, 1551, 'Die 27 spil des schmidlein' tells of the roles played by a certain mastersinger named Schmidlein in the performances of twenty-seven plays, chiefly of Hans Sachs, through an unknown number of years preceding the date of the poem. For text of poem and identification of the plays see Michels in *Seufferts Vierteljahrschr.* III, 42 ff. (also 615), Herrmanns *Forschungen*, 142 ff. Keller-Goetze 26, p. 48 ff.

9. In Hans Sachs' own list of his works his comedy *Violanta*, written in 1545, is entered again under date of Dec. 17, 1549, with the remark 'gepessert vnd gehalten.' See Keller-Goetze XXV, Nr. 3205a.

10. In this same list the comedy *Thitus und Gisippus*, written in 1546, is entered again later with the remark 'Anno salutis 1553 gemert vnd gespilt.' 1553 is one of the years in which the council minutes show no public performances. Keller-Goetze XXV, Nr. 4259a.

11. A little later than the period under discussion, in 1622 and 1623 and again in 1636, the protocol of the mastersingers mention performances on Trinity Sunday in the suburb Wöhrd. These are not mentioned in the council minutes, although Wöhrd was under the council's jurisdiction. The protocol for 1636 gives interesting expense data. See under these dates in the *Meistersinger Protokolle* in Vols. 213 and 214 of *Stuttg. Lit. Ver.*, also Hampe, p. 102-3.

In addition to these cases of unrecorded play-giving, many of which must have been private, it seems necessary to assume considerable private dramatic activity of the mastersingers to explain and justify the well-known passage in Hans Sachs' intro-

duction to volume III of his works, a volume containing exclusively plays: "...weil ich sie den meisten theil selb hab agiren unnd spielen helfen, wiewol der auch vil nie an tag kommen noch gespielt sindt worden . . .". The repertoires of Hans Sachs' eight seasons of public playing would amount at the most to twenty or thirty plays, while the number in volume III, to which 'den meisten theil' refers, is 102 and Hans Sachs' total number is about 209. Evidence of the mastersingers' continued interest in the drama after 1613 may be seen in their 'supplications' to the council made after this date and regularly refused. There is record of these for every season from 1614 to 1618 and then in the years 1624, 1625, 1628, and 1643. This long continued interest was doubtless kept alive by private dramatic activity. Hampe, in his article on Ambrosius Osterreicher, speaks of this interest "so dass wohl einer (Hans Winter, 1621) in der Singschule bat, ihn doch lieber beim Komödienspiel zu verwenden, da er weder viel singen könne, noch eine schöne Stimme habe."

From the evidence presented it is clear that, although the council minutes are our chief source of knowledge about Nürnberg theater, they do not reveal the full extent of dramatic interest and activity on the part of the Nürnberg mastersingers in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. And in this period, before the development of professional acting, private performances, about which we know so little, cannot have differed very essentially from public ones and may thus have had an importance in Nürnberg's theater development relatively greater than they could have had in later periods.

NEIL C. BROOKS.

University of Illinois.

²⁰ Keller-Goetze X, 6

²¹ In Stiefels *Hans Sachs Forschungen*, p. 400. The authority he gives is Will, Bibl. Norica III, No. 782, p. 663.